

the age of Pericles by the restorations of Hadrian? Yet he would not commit so great a blunder.

The great efforts of antique architecture are confined to temples or theatres, which at the best can be only a room. The Alhambra is a palace, and the opportunity for invention is, of course, infinitely increased. It is not a ruin, as I expected, scarcely in a state of dilapidation. Certainly, under the patronage of our late monarch, it might have been restored to all its pristine splendour, though I think a compliant Parliament would have been almost as necessary as Sir Jeffrey Wyatville. Everything about it, though exquisitely proportioned, is slight and small and delicate. Murphy makes the Court of Pillars too large and coarse. Around this court are chambers with carved and purple roofs studded with gold, and walls entirely covered with the most fanciful relief, picked out with that violet tint which must have been copied from their Andalusian skies. In these you may sit in the coolest shade, reclining upon cushions, with your beads or pipe, and view the most dazzling sunlight in the court, which assuredly must scorch the flowers if the faithful lions ever ceased from pouring forth that element which you must travel in Spain or Africa to honour. Pindar was quite right.¹ These chambers are innumerable. There is the Hall of the Ambassadors, always the most sumptuous; the Hall of Justice; the rooms of the sultanas and of the various members of the family, quite perfect, not a single roof has given. What a scene! Ah, that you were here! But conceive it in the times of the Boabdils; conceive it with all its courtly decoration, all the gilding, all the imperial purple, all the violet relief, all the scarlet borders, all the glittering inscriptions and costly mosaics, burnished, bright and fresh; conceive it full of still greater ornaments, the living groups with their rich and vivid and picturesque costume, and, above all, their shining arms; some standing in groups conversing, some smoking in sedate silence, some telling their beads, some squatting round a storier. Then the bustle and the rush, and the arming horsemen all in motion,² and all glancing in the most brilliant sun.

Meredith records a curious incident of their first visit.

The old lady who showed us over the Alhambra, talkative and intelligent, would have it that Benjamin D. was a Moor, many of whom come to visit this palace, which they say will

¹*Kpiarov ffv |>8wp* — Water is best. ² *Letters*, pp. 28, 29.